

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (cancelled)
2. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 wherein said liner is made from a material having a melting point greater than about 265° F and a shore A hardness value of about 70.
3. (cancelled)
4. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.
5. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.
6. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 5 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging a collar.
7. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 6 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

8. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 6 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

9. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 wherein said cap includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein said liner is made from a thermoplastic material.

12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein the angle Θ is less than about 20°.

14. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 13 wherein the angle Θ is about 20°.

15. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 13 wherein the angle Θ is less than about 10°.

16. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.

17. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.

18. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 17 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging a collar.

19. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 18 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

20. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 18 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

21. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein said cap includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (withdrawn): A method for maintaining pressure against a seal affixed to a container lip as a sealed container is exposed to relatively high temperature and pressure conditions, said method comprising reversibly affixing a closure to said container such that a liner of said closure abuts a surface of said seal so as to sandwich said seal between said liner and said container lip, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said seal upon exposure to elevated temperatures, elevated pressure, or a combination of elevated temperature and elevated pressure.

25. (withdrawn): The method of claim 24 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

26. (previously presented): A retort capable closure in combination with a container comprising:

- a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a peelable seal covering said opening;
- b. a closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt

depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface, and
having at least one thread affixed to the interior skirt surface in a
spiral and engageable with a mating thread on an exterior surface
of said neck; and,

c. a liner, proportioned to fit firmly within said closure and
abutting the top interior surface thereof, said liner defining a
resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions,
and said liner being made from a material capable of being
compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being
capable of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow
said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said cap and
against said seal when said closure is affixed to said container, said
liner being made of at least a portion of rubber and a portion of a
thermoplastic material in combination to maintain sufficient
pressure against said peelable seal to prevent said seal from
separating from said container lip when said container is heated to
greater than 212 °F and said container relative internal pressure
exceeds 0 PSI.

27. (previously presented): A retort capable closure in combination with a
container comprising:

a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening
therein, and a peelable seal covering said opening;

- b. a closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface;
- c. at least one thread affixed to the skirt interior surface and circumscribing the skirt in a spiral such that a thread receiving groove is formed, said thread having an upper edge wherein an angle Θ is defined between the upper edge and a horizontal plane, and the angle Θ is less than about 60°;
- d. a liner being made of at least a portion of vulcanized rubber and a portion of polypropylene, proportioned to fit firmly within said closure and abutting the top interior surface thereof, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said cap and against said seal when said cap is affixed to said container and the internal pressure of said container is raised above 0 psi and said container internal temperature is raised to above 212°F wherein said liner maintains sufficient pressure on said peelable seal to prevent said seal from disengaging said lip during a retort operation.

28. (currently amended): A closure in combination with a container comprising:

- a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a seal covering said opening;
- b. a closure, having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface, and having at least one thread affixed to the interior skirt surface in a spiral and engageable with a mating thread on an exterior surface of said neck; and
- c. a liner, having a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness in a sealing zone such that said seal is sandwiched between said liner and said container lip at a pressure sufficient to retain said seal against said lip when said sealed container is subject to retort processing conditions, said liner being a resiliently compressible material having at least a portion of a thermoset material in combination with a thermoplastic material to provide a high enough melting point such that said closure can be passed through a retort processing without said seal detaching from said container lip.

29. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 wherein said liner is made from a material having a melting point greater than about 265°F and a shore A hardness value of about 70.

30. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 29 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers, or a combination thereof.

31. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.

32. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.

33. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 32 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging a collar.

34. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 33 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

35. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 33 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

36. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 wherein said closure includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.

37. (new): A retort capable closure in combination with a container comprising:

- a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a peelable seal covering said opening;
- b. a closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface;
- c. at least one thread affixed to the skirt interior surface and circumscribing the skirt in a spiral such that a thread receiving groove is formed, said thread having an upper edge wherein an angle Θ is defined between the upper edge and a horizontal plane, and the angle Θ is less than about 60° ;
- d. a non-foam liner being made of at least a portion of vulcanized rubber and a portion of polypropylene, proportioned to fit firmly within said closure and abutting the top interior surface thereof, said non-foam liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, and said non-foam liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said non-foam liner to maintain a positive pressure against said cap and against said seal when said cap is affixed to said container and the internal pressure of

said container is raised above 0 psi and said container internal temperature is raised to above 212°F wherein said non-foam liner maintains sufficient pressure on said peelable seal to prevent said seal from disengaging said lip during a retort operation.

38. (new): A retort capable closure in combination with a container comprising:

- a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a peelable seal covering said opening;
- b. a closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface;
- c. at least one thread affixed to the skirt interior surface and circumscribing the skirt in a spiral such that a thread receiving groove is formed, said thread having an upper edge wherein an angle Θ is defined between the upper edge and a horizontal plane, and the angle Θ is less than about 60°;
- d. a liner being made of at least a portion of vulcanized rubber and a portion of polypropylene, wherein said liner being free from foaming agents, said liner proportioned to fit firmly within said closure and abutting the top interior surface thereof, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a

recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said cap and against said seal when said cap is affixed to said container and the internal pressure of said container is raised above 0 psi and said container internal temperature is raised to above 212°F wherein said liner maintains sufficient pressure on said peelable seal to prevent said seal from disengaging said lip during a retort operation.